M3 Written by Erica Schultz Art by Vicente Alcázar
Issue #1

Page 1 Panel 1
Black frame.

MAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): Why don't you start at the beginning.

Page 1 Panel 2
ECU of a woman's dark eyes. One eyebrow is arched up, inquisitively. We don't see her face in its entirety until much later.

Page 1 Panel 3
ECU woman's lips with a devious smile.

WOMAN: The beginning?

MAN (OUT OF PANEL): Yes.



Page 2 Panel 1
Beautiful landscape of Rome.

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): My name was Machiavella Maria Marcona. I was born in Rome in 1975.

Page 2 Panel 2
CU of the left side of the woman's face. There's a large, noticeable scar on her cheek, like half of a "Glasgow Grin."

MAN (OUT OF PANEL): Your name "was?"

WOMAN: It had to change it… but you already knew that.

Page 2 Panel 3
A young man and a young woman holding a baby girl. They look happy. The man has an ID badge on his clothing. It looks official.

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): My parents were Italian nationals who worked for the government…

Page 2 Panel 4
The young man is in an alley. A shady deal is going down.

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): …and themselves.

Page 2 Panel 5
The young man is walking towards the young woman. She looks anxious. He looks confident.

*LIDIA: *Si fa?*
**Is it over?*

*BRUNO: *Sì.*
**Yes.*

MAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): Yes… Bruno and Lidia Marcona. What was it they were into?



Page 3 Panel 1
Bruno and Lidia Marcona are walking down a Rome street at night.

*LIDIA: *Non mi piacciono, Bruno. Mi fanno paura.*
**I don't like them, Bruno. They scare me.*

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): They started out brokering small arms deals for gangs ***and thugs. Then they went big time when they got into secrets.***

MAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): What kind of secrets?

Page 3 Panel 2
Bruno grabs Lidia by the shoulders and pushes her against a building. She looks terrified. He looks vicious.

*BRUNO: *Stai zitto! Tu pensi che io voglio fare questo?*
**Shut up! You think I want to do this?*

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): National security secrets.

Page 3 Panel 3
Portrait of Bruno. He looks frustrated and sad.

*BRUNO: *Siamo in troppo profonde. Non possiamo uscire ora.*
**We are in too deep. We can't get out now.*

Page 3 Panel 4
Bruno has taken his hands off her. Lidia reaches out to try and calm Bruno down.

*LIDIA: *Mea culpa, il mio amore. Sono solo tanta paura.*
**I'm sorry, my love. I'm just so frightened.*

Page 3 Panel 5
Bruno and Lidia start walking again. Bruno has his arm around her and he kisses the top of her head.

*BRUNO: *So che questo. Ma non c'è nulla che possiamo fare. Dammi tempo. I rendano effettivo questo diritto.*
**I know. But there's nothing we can do. Give me time. I'll make this right.*

MAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): So your mother wanted out.

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): They both did…

Page 3 Panel 6
Profile of the woman.

WOMAN: I think.

Page 4 Panel 1
We see a notepad with notes scribbled on it. A man's left hand is writing more.

MAN: So… when did you lose them?

Page 4 Panel 2
The woman's head is down and the bottom of her face is cast in shadow. She looks up at the Man. Contempt is in her eyes.

WOMAN: You mean, 'When were they murdered?'

Page 4 Panel 3
We see a man's hand tugging at a tie. We don't see his face, just his right hand tugging at the tie around his neck. He has on a short sleeved-button down shirt. His left hand still holds the pen.

MAN: Is that something you are comfortable talking about?

Page 4 Panel 4
ECU The woman bites her lip.

Page 4 Panel 5
A large puddle of blood with the silhouettes of Bruno and Lidia lying face down in it.

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): Sure.

Page 4 Panel 6
CU of the man wiping his brow with a handkerchief. We see his forehead and eyes, but not the rest of his face.

MAN: Okay, then…

Page 5 Panel 1
We see Lidia and Bruno standing up against a wall with their hands up, facing someone who is pointing a gun at them. We see the gunman's arm and his shadow cast on the floor. He's wearing black leather gloves and pointing a 38 Special Revolver at them.

LIDIA: We…

BRUNO: Lidia, stai zitto! We have your money. We need time to get it.

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): I was 7.

Page 5 Panel 2
Portrait of the gunman. He's got icy blue eyes and a newsboy a cap. He's got 5 o'clock shadow and his face is pockmarked.

GUNMAN: Well, then… Where is it, boyo?

Page 5 Panel 3
Two shot of Lidia and Bruno with their hands up.

BRUNO: Domani… Tomorrow. You come back and you get your money.

GUNMAN (OUT OF PANEL): Tomorrow, eh?

Page 5 Panel 4
A medium shot of the gunman holds the gun up in the air, taking it off of them.

GUNMAN: Alright… Tomorrow, then.

Page 5 Panel 5
Bruno and Lidia put their hands down, and breathe sighs of relief. They're sweating. Lidia still looks terrified.

BRUNO: Grazie mille… Thank you.

Page 6 Panel 1
The gunman in the foreground, starts to walk out. His back is to Lidia and Bruno who are still against the wall.

GUNMAN: But…

Page 6 Panel 2
The gunman turns to face them again. He isn't pointing the gun at them, but he still has it out.

GUNMAN: If you don't have the money by tomorrow… Let's say by… 2pm?

Page 6 Panel 3
ECU of the gunman's mouth sneering. He has crooked, yellow teeth.

GUNMAN: I won't be so generous.

Page 6 Panel 4
We see the gunman's shadow and the shadow of the door closing.

Page 6 Panel 5
Lidia falls to her knees, crying.

*LIDIA: *E adesso?*
**What now?*

Page 7 Panel 1
Bruno is pacing, leaving Lidia on the floor. He's thinking.

MAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): Did he know who he was dealing with?

Page 7 Panel 2
A little girl is standing in the doorway, looking at her father pacing and her mother crying. Her name is Machiavella (Vella for short).

VELLA: Mama?

Page 7 Panel 3
ECU of Vella's eyes as a little girl. Tears are welling up in them.

MAN (OUT OF PANEL): Ms. McGrath?

Page 7 Panel 4
Match to ECU of the Woman's eyes. They're the same eyes, but older, more experienced.

MAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): Ms. Mc…

Page 7 Panel 5
Woman turns her head, avoiding the man's eyes, revealing her right side. Her skin is perfect on this side.

WOMAN: I heard you.

Page 7 Panel 6
Vella is kneeling next to her mother who is still bent over crying.

*VELLA: *Mama stai bene?*
**Mama are you okay?*

Page 8 Panel 1
Lidia looks up. She's terrified, but trying to look calm for Vella. Lidia has tears in her eyes.

*LIDIA: *Sì, piccola. Sto bene.*
**Yes, little one. I'm fine.*

Page 8 Panel 2
We see Vella. She's scared, but trying to be brave. Lidia puts her hand on the Vella's left cheek. The scar isn't there.

LIDIA: Sto bene.

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): They had no idea.

Page 8 Panel 3
Bruno picks Lidia up from the floor, she's still partially bent over.

*BRUNO: * Prendi le valige.*
**Get the suitcases.*

Page 8 Panel 4
Portrait of Lidia confused.

*LIDIA: *Cosa?*
**What?*

Page 8 Panel 5
Bruno stands over Lidia and Vella.

*VELLA: *Ma papà…*
**But papa…*



Page 9 Panel 1
Bruno frantically grabs at papers on a nearby table. Lidia approaches him.

MAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): So that was his plan? To leave?

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): Not the brightest move, I know…

Page 9 Panel 2
Lidia is right behind him, talking calmly and softly.

*LIDIA: *Ma Bruno, ha detto che abbiamo fino a domani.*
**But Bruno, he said we have until tomorrow.*

Page 9 Panel 3
Bruno rounds on her and grabs her shoulders.

*BRUNO: *Non capite? Non ci sono soldi. Non c'è più. E 'tutto finito.*
**Don't you understand? There is no money. It's gone. It's all gone.*

Page 9 Panel 4
Portrait of Lidia terrified.

*LIDIA: *Più soldi?*
**No more money?*

Page 9 Panel 5
Lidia starts bawling and Bruno hugs her tightly.

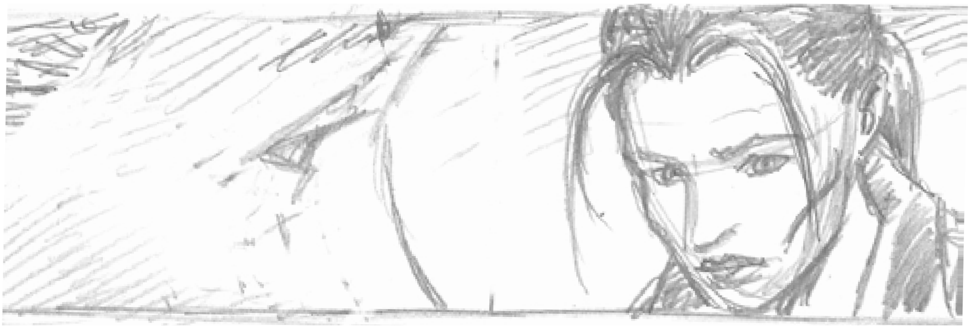
*BRUNO: *Sarà bene, il mio amore.*
**It'll be okay, my love.*

Page 9 Panel 6
Bruno pulls Lidia away from him. He's got a positive look on his face, falsely happy.

*BRUNO: *Sto andando a fare tutto meglio.*
**I'm going to make everything better.*

MAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): But he didn't make everything better… did he?

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): You already know the answer to that.



Page 10 Panel 1
Bruno, Lidia and Vella are standing in line at the airport. They look very nervous and anxious. Vella is more or less oblivious to what is going on. They each have a small suitcase with them.

MAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): What did they tell you?

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): That we were going on a surprise trip.

Page 10 Panel 2
A red headed boy a year or two older than her sees Vella and waves at her.

Page 10 Panel 3
Vella smiles coyly and waves back.

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): That we were going to Disney World.

Page 10 Panel 4
He gestures for her to come over with his finger.

Page 10 Panel 5
Vella looks up at her parents. They're busy checking the board to see what time their flight will leave.

Page 10 Panel 6
Vella begins to walk towards the boy.

Page 10 Panel 7
Vella is within feet of him.



Page 11 Panel 1
Lidia looks down and sees that Vella is gone. She has a horrified look on her face.

Page 11 Panel 2
Lidia frantically looks around and sees that Vella is far from her.

LIDIA: Piccola!

Page 11 Panel 3
Lidia grabs Vella and yanks her away from the boy.

Page 11 Panel 4
Lidia dragging Vella back to Bruno. Bruno is confused and Lidia is upset.

*LIDIA: *Non fare mai più di nuovo, mi senti?*
**Don't ever do that again, you hear me?*

*VELLA: *Mea culpa, mama.*
**I'm sorry, mama.*

*BRUNO: *Che cosa è successo? Dove andava?*
**What happened? Where'd she go?*



Page 12 Panels 1-3
Montage of the family traveling. Bruno, Lidia and Vella boarding an airplane. Bruno, Lidia and Vella in a cab.

MAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): How long did it take you to get there?

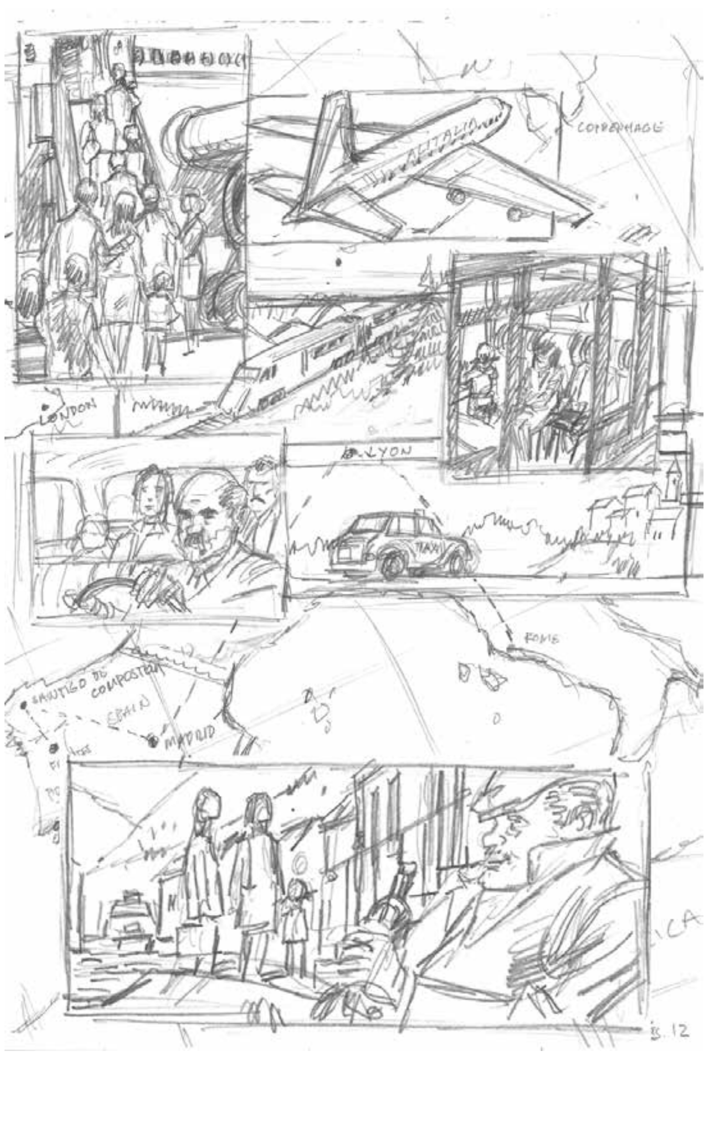
Page 12 Panel 4
An overhead view of a map, showing the crisscrossing paths they took.

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): Days. I remember thinking that America didn't look so far away on a map.

Page 12 Panel 5 (Large Panel)
Bruno, Lidia and Vella in front of a dirty apartment building on a poorly lit street. There's a drunk bum on the front steps. The cab has already started to pull away.

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): When it was all over, we ended up in northern Portugal, near Prado, right on the Spanish border.

MAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): Why there?



Page 13 Panel 1
Bruno, Lidia and Vella in the doorway of a dingy apartment.

*BRUNO: *Benvenuti a casa.*
**Welcome home.*

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): My father had a cousin there. He owned a few tenements.

Page 13 Panel 2
A wide shot of the apartment. It's a small studio with a kitchenette and old, tattered furniture. There's one bed and a small couch. It's not the lap of luxury, by any means.

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): We could stay there for nothing.

Page 13 Panel 3
Portrait of Lidia. She's trying to make the best of the situation. She has a fake smile on her face for Vella's sake.

*LIDIA: *Questo è ... grande. Non è vero, Vella?*
**This is… great. Isn't it, Vella?*

Page 13 Panel 4
Portrait of Vella. She's confused.

*VELLA: *Ma ho pensato che saremmo andati a Disney World.*
**But I thought we were going to Disney World.*

Page 13 Panel 5
Bruno is noticeably furious and storms off. Lidia bends down to talk to Vella.

*LIDIA: *Noi siamo ... Ci accingiamo a Disney. Ma adesso dobbiamo restare qui. E 'solo per un breve periodo di tempo.*
**We are... We are going to Disney. But right now we have to stay here. It's only for a little while.*



Page 14 Panel 1
Lidia and Vella are unpacking while Bruno is standing by the window, looking out, and smoking a cigarette.

Page 14 Panel 2
Lidia has prepared a small meal and is serving it to Vella and Bruno who are sitting at a very small, rickety table right next to the kitchenette. Lidia has a forced smile on her face.

*LIDIA: *La cena è pronta.*
**Dinner is ready.*

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): Mama did her best to keep us all happy…

Page 14 Panel 3
Bruno and Lidia are fighting. Vella is asleep on the small couch.

*LIDIA: *Sto cercando, Bruno. Io veramente sono. Ma non possiamo continuare a vivere così.*
**I am trying, Bruno. I truly am. But we cannot keep living like this.*

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): But it wasn't long before the seams started to show.

Page 14 Panel 4
Two shot of Bruno. He's holding Lidia by the shoulders.

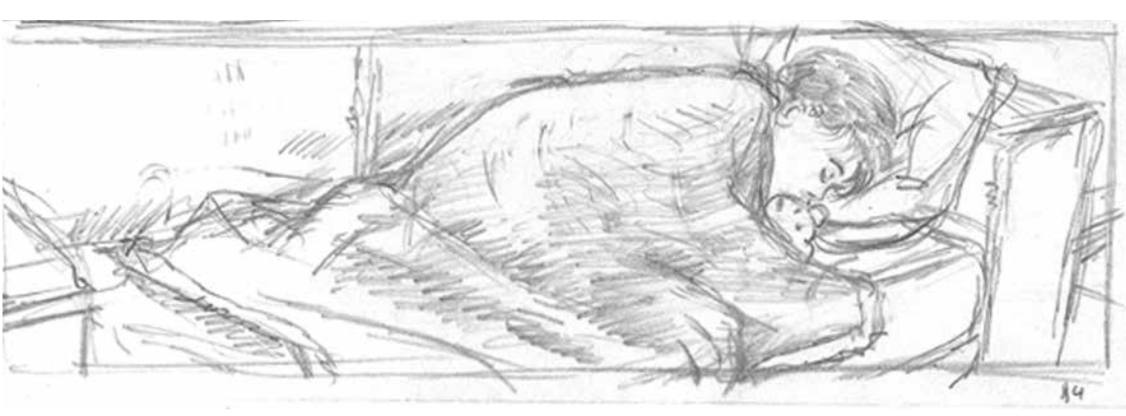
*BRUNO: *Pensi che io non conosco questo?*
**You think I don't know this?*

*LIDIA: *Per favore… se non per causa mia, che per lei.*
**Please… if not for my sake, than for hers.*

Page 14 Panel 5
Overhead shot of Vella sleeping soundly on the couch. She's got tattered blankets on her.

MAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): So… how long was "a little while?"

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): A few months.



Page 15 Panel 1
Overhead shot of Bruno and Lidia sleeping in bed.

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): It took him that long…

Page 15 Panel 2
Same shot as above, but now there's a shadow cast across them.

WOMAN (CAPTION, NARRATING): To find us.

Page 15 Panel 3
Bruno has a gun in his face. His eyes are still closed.

GUNMAN: Didja think I wouldn't catch up ta ya, boyo?

Page 15 Panel 4
Lidia and Bruno are both awake now, sitting up in bed. Lidia is terrified. Bruno is trying to remain calm.

BRUNO: Please…

Page 15 Panel 5
Portrait of the Gunman. We see the gun in his hand.

GUNMAN: I told you… I warned you… If you didn't have my money, well I wouldn't be so generous to you then.

Page 15 Panel 6
A table with a file folder open. We see a photo of the gunman, David McGrath and some writing on the paperwork about him.

MAN: David McGrath. He was an assassin for the IRA. How'd your parents get mixed up with him in the first place?



Page 16 Full Page
We see an overhead shot of Lidia and Bruno dead on the floor. Blood has pooled all around them. David McGrath's shadow is above them.



Page 17 Panel 1
We see the woman. Half her face is in shadow, but we can see she's annoyed, bordering on angry.

WOMAN: Look, why are you asking all these questions? You've got all the answers in your little pile of papers there. Why am I even here?

MAN (OUT OF PANEL): You know why.

Page 17 Panel 2
The woman leans in and for the first time we see her entire face. She has dark hair, and large dark, almost black eyes. She's very beautiful save for the large scar on her left cheek.

WOMAN: Explain it to me again.

Page 17 Panel 3
A wide two shot of the woman and the man. They're in some type of interrogation room. He leans forward to meet her. They're now both in the light. He's attractive. FBI Agent Morris is just under 40 years old. We now see that she's handcuffed behind her back to her chair.

Page 17 Panel 4
Portrait of Agent Morris

AGENT MORRIS: Because you're a killer.

Page 17 Panel 5
Vella leans back and laughs.

VELLA: You have no idea what I do.



Page 18 Panel 1
We see Agent Morris flipping through another file, this time on her.

MORRIS: I think I have a clue.

Page 18 Panels 2 & 3 (Inset shots)
A silhouette of Vella standing over a dead body with a smoking gun in hand.

MORRIS (CAPTION, NARRATING): Two police commissioners and four federal judges…

Vella is crawling out a window with a bloody knife in hand.

MORRIS (CAPTION, NARRATING): All dead… all by you… All in the last 4 years.

Page 18 Panel 4
Two shot. Morris is looking up at her from the file. Vella is leaning in and over the table as far as the cuffs will allow her.

MORRIS: That's quite a record.

VELLA: Go to hell.

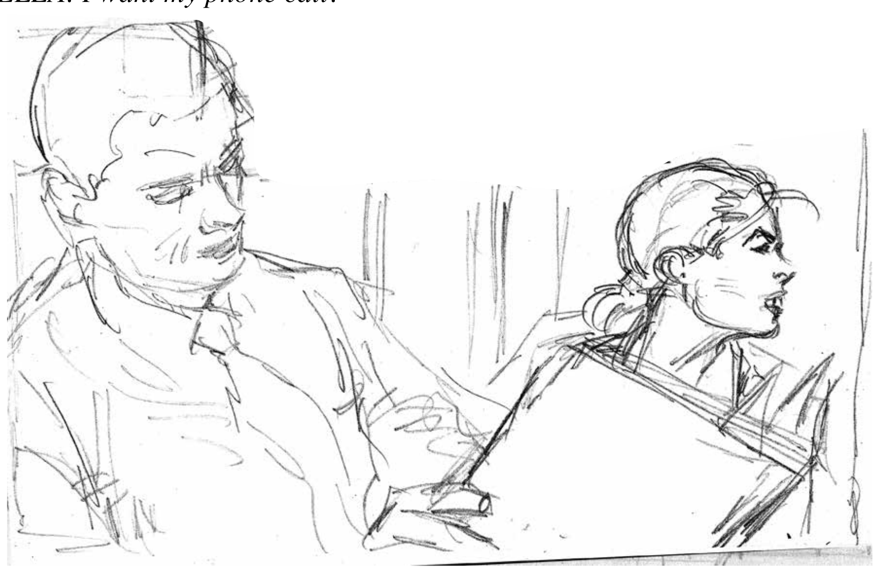
Page 18 Panel 5
Portrait of Morris, reading from the file.

MORRIS: Machiavella Maria Marcona. Mackenzie Marie McGrath. Martina Macey Matthews. Marissa Maylin Martin. It goes on and on… You're going to run out of "M" names, there.

MORRIS: But whatever you call yourself, you're a killer…

Page 18 Panel 6
Vella leans back in her chair again and looks nonchalantly at the wall.

VELLA: I want my phone call.



Page 19 Panel 1
Agent Morris has gotten up and is walking across the room towards her.

MORRIS: Sure, sure, you'll get a phone call…

Page 19 Panel 2
Two shot of Morris in her face.

MORRIS: When I get some answers.

Page 19 Panel 3
She turns her head from him.

VELLA: You can't hold me… You've got no proof of anything.

Page 19 Panel 4
Morris grabs her by the shoulders. She stares at him, surprised at his forcefulness and strength.

VELLA: Let go of me…

MORRIS: These are different times… You're a suspected terrorist. I can hold you on suspicion of picking your nose.

Page 19 Panel 5 (Inset shot)
Vella angry and yelling at Morris.

VELLA: I said, let me go!

Page 19 Panel 6
Morris releases her and sits on the edge of the table. Vella is relieved.

VELLA: Look, I know you think that catching me will get you that big promotion and you'll get the girl and you may finally get laid, but I'm not the bad guy here.

MORRIS: Really? You walk into a Federal building with a gun. What am I supposed to think?

Page 19 Panel 7
Portrait of Vella rolling her eyes.

VELLA: I really don't care.

MORRIS (OUT OF PANEL): That's right... Classic avoidance.

Page 20 Panel 1
Wide shot of Morris up again, making his way back to the other end of the table. His back is to Vella

MORRIS: So let's start with the basics… who hired you to kill Judge Kaplan?

VELLA: Who says I was hired to kill anyone?

Page 20 Panel 2
Morris turns, facing her now, and he leans on the table. He's pissed.

MORRIS: You think I'm stupid don't you?

VELLA (OUT OF PANEL): Well, you are kinda cute…

Page 20 Panel 3
Portrait of Vella with a sly smile on her face.

VELLA: And cute boys are rarely smart.

MORRIS (OUT OF PANEL): Color me flattered. Now why were you trying to…

VELLA: Have you ever looked at Judge Kaplan's conviction stats?

Page 20 Panel 4
Portrait of Morris surprised.

MORRIS: His what?

VELLA (OUT OF PANEL): His conviction stats… I don't know what you law enforcement types call it… But have you ever wondered why in an apparently random lottery, Judge Michael Kaplan almost ALWAYS presides over Luis Vargas' crew?

MORRIS: That can't be…

Page 20 Panel 5
Portrait of Vella. She's narrowing her eyes at Morris.

VELLA: Since you're so fond of judging people based on their paperwork, why don't you pull Kaplan's file…

Page 20 Panel 6
Vella is relaxed as Morris stomps out of the room.

VELLA: I'll wait.

Page 21 Panel 1
Vella looks up at the corner of the room.

Page 21 Panel 2 (Inset)
We see a CU of the camera. No red light is on.

Page 21 Panel 3
She has her head cocked to the side like an inquisitive puppy.

Page 21 Panel 4
ECU of a smile on her face.

Page 21 Panel 5
Morris comes back into the room.

MORRIS: Now… Where were we?



Page 22 Panel 1
Vella leaps across the table and catches Morris off guard, knocking him to the ground.

Page 22 Panel 2
She punches him a few times, knocking him unconscious. We see one side of the handcuffs dangling. Her free wrist is scraped and bloody.

Page 22 Panel 3
She grabs his handcuff key and releases herself.

Page 22 Panel 4
She peeks out the door of the room and no one seems to notice her.

Page 22 Panel 5
She walks down a row of cubicles.

Page 22 Panels 6 & 7 (Insets)
ECU of Vella's hands grabbing a file and a pair of glasses from a desk.



Page 23 Panel 1
Vella makes it to the fire stairwell doorway, using the file as a "shield."

Page 23 Panel 2
Morris is at the doorway of the interrogation room. A colleague is coming down the corridor.

MORRIS: She… She's getting away.

PASSERBY: Who?

Page 23 Panel 3
The stairwell door closes without incident.



Page 24 Panel 1
Vella is loading a gun.

VELLA (CAPTION, NARRATING): Some call me a kill artist.

Page 24 Panel 2
We see Vella standing, her back facing the foreground. She’s holding a gun in each hand.

VELLA (CAPTION, NARRATING): Others just call me a killer.

Page 24 Panel 3
CU of her face, as if she’s looking out from the page. She has an eyebrow arched and a devious smile on her face.

VELLA (CAPTION, NARRATING): What do you call me?

